

The background image shows a street scene. On the left is a historic, multi-story brick building with a classical pediment and arched windows. To its right is a modern, multi-story white building with large glass windows and a flat roof. The sky is blue with some clouds.

## **Engagement and Strategy Policy**

## Engagement Strategy

### THE PURPOSE

To secure, encourage and develop opportunities for service users to engage with Shettleston Housing Association in all aspects of our work

### 1. Introduction

Shettleston Housing Association operates in accordance with;

- Statutory requirements,
- The standards set down in the Scottish Social Housing Charter,
- The requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator, in the formulation and implementation of all its policies.

SHA seeks to fulfil its Corporate Aims through the development and implementation of its policies and all SHA's policies operate to achieve its Strategic Objectives as set out in its Internal Management Plan.

### 2. Equalities

SHA is committed to providing equality of opportunity to all persons or groups within its area of operations in every aspect of its activities.

In operating this policy SHA will endeavor to ensure, equality of opportunity for all, at all times, and in all circumstances. The potential impact of this policy, either positive or negative, on any protected characteristics, was considered when developing this policy. This Equality Impact Assessment is attached to the policy. In line with this commitment to equality, this policy, and any summary or information leaflet, can be made available, free of charge, in a variety of formats including; large print, translation into another language or audio tape.

### 3. Access to Policy Information

SHA will ensure that its policies are made fully available to all tenants, applicants, members, persons or groups within its areas. Every effort will be made by SHA to support access and promote awareness of its policies by posting these on its website, developing summaries, guidance and information leaflets as appropriate.

### 4. Tenant Involvement and Consultation

SHA is committed to meet the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 in all of its policies and to meet the requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

SHA will involve tenants in the development of its policies and seek feedback in appropriate circumstances. It will ensure that any material change to services affecting tenants in this and other policies will be the subject of consultation.

## **5. Policy Monitoring**

SHA is committed to ensure that adequate monitoring of the implementation of its policies is undertaken. This will be achieved through regular review by the Management Committee, customer/tenant feedback surveys, and regular consultation with tenant/resident groups.

## **6. Risk Management and Assessment**

SHA has a detailed Risk Management Policy in place and it will assess the risks to the Association in the implementation of each of its policies as part of its risk management strategy.

## **7. Procedures**

SHA will develop a detailed set of procedures identifying actions, roles and responsibilities in the implementation its policies. These procedures will be subject to regular review and audit.

## **8. Training**

SHA will ensure that its staff are properly trained in terms of their knowledge and understanding of statutory requirements and the requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter pertaining to its policies. It will ensure that appropriate staff are kept up to date with all procedures pertaining to the implementation of policies. The Management Committee will have access to training to ensure that it can maintain appropriate control and overview of the policy and procedures.

## **9. Background Information**

Shettleston Housing Association is a Registered Social Landlord which is active in the communities of Shettleston, South Greenfield and Springboig. We are a community based landlord and so tenant/resident participation and community control are – and always have been – at the heart of what we do and how we carry out our activities.

### **One of our strategic aims is to**

“Deliver the highest quality of housing services and customer care to residents by providing a sensitive and efficient management and maintenance service to our tenants and owners”.

To do this successfully, Shettleston HA is committed to engaging effectively with people who use, or want to use our services, so that

- all of our services are informed by feedback and
- improvement is driven by tenant/resident expectations

This Strategy describes what we will do to put this commitment into practice.

## **10. Introduction**

**10.1** The Association recognises the importance of effective tenant participation both for the organisation and for individual tenants. In developing our strategy the Association believes that the benefits of effective tenant participation for everyone include:

- better service delivery and improved value for money;
- opportunities to develop new knowledge and skills;
- better communication between staff and tenants;
- better links between the Association and our community;
- informed and knowledgeable tenants who have the skills and confidence to influence decisions;
- staff and tenants being more aware of each other's perspectives and organisational and financial limitations;
- increased tenant satisfaction with their home and neighbourhood;
- breaking down misunderstandings, helping to remove mistrust between the Association and tenants, and building mutual respect and understanding;
- increased job satisfaction for staff

**10.2** The Association recognises there is no single means or best method of consulting with its tenants and will attempt to use methods of participation which best suit the identified needs and aspirations of those occupying our properties.

**10.3** This strategy is intended to be an evolving document. We will regularly review outcomes to ensure tenants and residents have opportunities to contribute to the future development of the Association's activities.

**10.4** The Association acknowledges that owners are not covered by the Tenant Participation provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 but we regard them as being an integral part of our approach.

- 10.5** The Association recognises that participation can range from the basic provision of information to tenants being in control. This Strategy strives to be a practical document and also recognises that we should also respect the right of tenants not to become involved in the affairs of their landlord.

## **11. Aims of the Strategy**

This Strategy has been developed to enable Shettleston HA to engage effectively with the people who use or want to use our services and who live or want to live in our community. It aims to identify the range of activities that Shettleston HA will undertake to support tenants and residents – and people who want to use our services - to comment on the services they receive and to help us to improve those services in ways that reflect their needs and aspirations.

It aims to enable tenants and residents to be effective in letting us know what they think and to make effective use of that information in improving the quality of our services. It also establishes a framework for monitoring our success in engaging with our tenants and residents and in complying with legal and regulatory requirements.

As their needs change and as our relationship with them develops, we will review our Strategy and adapt our approach. In developing and implementing this Strategy, Shettleston HA aims to exceed minimum requirements and maintain our commitment to putting our tenants and residents at the heart of what we do.

In delivering this Strategy, Shettleston HA will

- Meet all legal, regulatory and good practice requirements
- Involve residents in our decision-making processes
- Encourage resident involvement on the Management Committee
- Encourage shareholders and tenants to vote in the selection of the Management Committee
- Provide practical support to resident groups
- Promote social inclusion and community development initiatives
- Promote knowledge of our services and other business activities
- Regularly review resident involvement practices and the outcomes achieved

## **12. Legal and Policy Context**

- 12.1** Section 53 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on registered social landlords to have a formal tenant participation strategy, to register and recognise tenants' organisations and to consult with tenants about key issues including:

- Repairs and maintenance

- Managing Estates
- Housing management issues
- The Tenant Participation Strategy
- Any change of landlord
- Any rent or service charge increases
- Investment Programmes
- Service Review
- Service performance

**12.2** The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 introduced the Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC), effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012. This Charter is intended to ensure that tenants and service users have a clear statement of the services that their landlord is providing and that they are able to measure and compare their performance with other landlords. The Scottish Housing Regulator has responsibility for assessing compliance with the Charter and making information available that will help service users to compare their landlord's performance. The Association will comply with the following Charter requirements most relevant to this policy.

- **Outcome 1: Equalities** - every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.
- **Outcome 2: Communication** - tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.
- **Outcome 3: Participation** - tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

**12.3** The Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management that were published by the SHR in 2012, place great importance on tenant and service user consultation.

**In particular, Standard Two says:**

“The Landlord is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.”

- 12.4** In addition, this strategy complements the priorities of good practice guidance such as the National Strategy for Tenant Participation “Partners in Participation” and the Scottish Government’s Guide to Successful Tenant Participation.

### **13. Guiding Principles and Values**

- 13.1** As a community based landlord, we have a long history of tenant and resident participation and this Strategy builds on our experience. We have always:
- been majority controlled by tenants of the Association
  - promoted the formation of registered tenant organisations
  - worked with specific topic focus groups
  - encouraged participation in the review of policies
- 13.2** **Empowerment and Engagement** is a core value, as agreed by the Association’s Management Committee. This is an integral core value which underpins all our actions and is formerly noted within the Internal Management Plan to reflect the importance the Association places on this value.
- 13.3** Our rules provide every tenant of Shettleston Housing Association with the right to have a say in who leads the organisation by voting on who should join the Management Committee at the AGM.
- 13.4** This Strategy builds on our experience and takes account of legal and regulatory requirements from both the Scottish Government and the Scottish Housing Regulator.
- 13.5** We believe that effective participation and engagement depend on good communication and information sharing: it’s a two way process between Shettleston Housing Association and the people who use our services. The Association is therefore committed to ensuring that:
- All literature and communication with residents is clear, concise and easy to understand. Printed material is in plain language, jargon free, clear and attractive in format.
  - A translation service will be provided where appropriate. Facilities will be made available on request for those who have either a visual or hearing impairment.
  - The person dealing with an issue or responsible for an area of service is clearly identified in all communications.
- 13.6** We also believe that it’s important that individual tenants and residents are able to choose the level of their engagement with us and that we offer a range of ways that support and respect their choices.

## 14. Engagement

We recognise that there are several areas where current and potential tenants and residents might want to comment on our activities and so we are committed to offering a range of opportunities to make it easy for this to happen:

**14.1 Membership of the Association/Management Committee:** membership of the Association, and through this, election to the Management Committee represents the simplest and most direct way for participation in Shettleston. Membership costs £1 for life and is automatically open for all residents who live within our area of operation. Details of that area are set out in the attached appendix.

The Association will promote membership in two ways:

- 1. Existing Tenants Not Already Members** - the Association will provide regular information within its newsletter and website promoting membership and encouraging tenants to join the Association.
- 2. New Tenants** - All new tenants will be given information on membership when signing their Tenancy Agreement. In addition, it will be further promoted at the “settling in” visit.

Members will be encouraged to stand for election to the Management Committee. Elections to the Committee, where the number of candidates exceeds the number of places for election, involve a postal ballot of all tenants as well as all share holding members. The relevant newsletters issued leading up to the AGM will include articles encouraging members to stand for election.

We hold an annual general meeting that is open to all our members in September each year. At the AGM, we will report on our activities during the year, provide information about our performance and financial health and report on our compliance with the requirements of the Social Housing Charter and the Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management for Registered Social Landlords.

Everyone who is eligible to attend the AGM will be notified at least fourteen days in advance. The arrangements for the meeting (including a copy of the agenda) will be available on our website and the date will be publicised on Twitter and Facebook.

**14.2 HOWDY** : this facility enables people to comment on our repairs and maintenance service and on the services we provide more generally. HOWDY (How Did We Do?) responses can be completed on-line or by filling in a card. Everyone who has a repair carried out will be asked to comment on the service they receive. Feedback will be reviewed on a monthly basis and will be reported quarterly to the Management Committee. Our repairs performance against targets will be reported in each issue of our newsletter (Shettleston Matters).



**14.3 Surveys** : at least every three years we will commission an external organisation to carry out a formal satisfaction survey. The Association will survey both tenants and owners to ascertain specific information which will help the Association in planning future services and in our reporting to the Regulator via the Charter. We will invite tenants and owners to form specific forum groups to help us develop the survey questionnaire unless the survey is being conducted on the satisfaction indicators included within the Annual Return of the Charter (ARC) as these are questions specified by the Regulator. The final approval of the survey will rest with our Management Committee. We will provide feedback to committee members and residents via newsletters, annual performance reports and social media on survey outcomes. We will also arrange to consult on any actions affecting service delivery that arise from the survey's recommendations.

We will also carry out surveys amongst residents of all new developments before the first anniversary of them moving in. Feedback from these surveys will be reported to the residents and will inform our completion process with the contractor.

New tenants will also be surveyed when moving into their property to provide the Association with immediate up to date feedback on aspects of the moving in process and aspects of the new home. The survey returns will be sent to an external organisation who will provide the Association with quarterly reports which will be reported to the Management Committee and reported to residents via the quarterly newsletter.

**14.4 Focus Groups** : are formed by the Association to provide an opportunity for small groups of interested tenants and residents to meet with Association staff in order to give their opinions on a range of subjects. We actively promote via our HOWDY cards, newsletter and in community engagement activities the opportunity for residents to register if they are interested in getting involved in the work of the Association. If a resident does note an interest in becoming more involved, the Engagement and Communication Officer, will arrange to contact the person and note their areas of interest in relation to service delivery.

**We will keep a consultation register**

When the Association is arranging to develop a focus group to seek residents views on a particular issue, all those who have expressed an interest will be contacted and invited to form a focus group. We will also advertise the focus group and ask for volunteers via the newsletter, social media and arrange to send text messages inviting residents to join the group. We will identify the purpose of each focus group, which will be asked to make recommendations that will be considered by either the Management Committee or a sub-committee. The outcome of focus groups will always be reported in the newsletter and on our website and we will also use Facebook and Twitter to communicate progress.

- 14.5 Newsletters** : we publish a newsletter (Shettleston Matters) four times a year and distribute it in paper form to all tenants and residents. We will make copies available in local libraries, community facilities and public buildings. Shettleston Matters is posted to our website at the same time; it is accessible by a clearly marked tab. Each newsletter will include a feedback section: You Said; We Did which will be based on the results of the HOWDY feedback, complaints and other comments and suggestions. As well as reporting the comments, we will provide information on our responses.
- 14.6 Annual Reporting** : each year, we will produce a report that draws together the key information about our performance and activities from the previous year. The report will be distributed to all members and people who use our services and copies will be made available widely in the community - in local libraries, community facilities and public buildings. Since September 2014, we will provide an annual report on our compliance with the requirements of the Social Housing Charter - we will consult with a focus group on an annual basis about the form the report should take.
- 14.7 Supporting Community Groups and Initiatives** : we will support the formation and operation of local groups that meet the needs and demands of the communities that we work in. Examples of groups that we support are the Community Growing Project, FUSE and Mens' Shed. Our support will be driven by the views of our tenants and residents in the communities concerned and we will seek their support (e.g. by volunteering) to ensure the success of the projects. Our support may be financial or may be through the provision of resources such as staff time/expertise or accommodation. All such initiatives will be considered by the Management Committee which will receive regular reports on their operation.
- 14.8 Complaints** : we handle complaints and comments in accordance with the requirements of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). We aim to learn from all comments and complaints and, through the operation of our Complaints Policy and this Engagement Strategy, to make it as easy as possible for tenants/residents to give us their views. We will report on the general outcomes of complaints four times a year in our newsletters and on our website and we will also produce an annual report.
- 14.9 Social Media** : we have a Facebook page and operate a Twitter account. We will use social media to widen the range of ways that we communicate, to increase our effectiveness and to expand the number of existing and potential tenants and residents that we can reach. We will post information about events, consultations and special initiatives on social media and we will also publicise the availability of performance reports, newsletters and meetings, including the AGM.
- 14.10 On-line** : we will publish information about our performance and tenant/resident feedback on our website where there will be a clearly marked tab to take users to the relevant section on the Social Housing Charter. This information will be updated quarterly.

- 14.11 Text Messages** : the Association introduced text messaging in 2016 as a means of contacting tenants and factored owners. This system is also aimed at making it easier for residents to contact us regarding any area of service delivery. Repair surveys are sent to those residents who have provided their mobile number. Residents who have provided a mobile number to the Association, however, are given the option to opt out of the text messaging service if they do not wish this form of contact.
- 14.12 Happy To Translate** : Shettleston is a member of Happy to Translate, a service that helps bridge the gap between people who want to access our services but who may have difficulty communicating in English. Our staff are trained to help and to identify the communication and language assistance that might be needed to help people engage with us and access our services.
- 14.13 Participating in and Supporting Local and Community Events** : we will support local community events (such as galas and festivals) in response to requests from the organisers and subject to available resources. We may have an information stall at such events to publicise our activities and we make staff available to offer advice and information.
- 14.14 Public Meetings** : such meetings may be held for a whole area or only for street/close meetings where appropriate. We will try as far as possible to ensure feedback is provided to tenants and/or owners on issues raised at such forums.
- 14.15 Leaflets** : leaflets are used mainly to provide summary information of the Association's policies or explain how procedures work e.g. making a complaint.
- 14.16 Face to face contact** : current and potential tenants and residents can visit our office for pre-arranged interviews and can also call into the office to speak to staff. We will respond positively to requests for local surgeries to enable tenants and residents to meet with staff in their local community. We will hold meetings and surgeries at different times of the day and evening to reach as many people as possible.
- 14.17 Consultation** : all consultation exercises will be publicised in our newsletter and on-line/Facebook/twitter. We will allow adequate time for tenants/residents to consider proposals and tell us what they think. We will always communicate the outcome of consultation exercises in newsletters and on-line.

## 15. How We Will Support Engagement

- 15.1 Annual Budget** : Shettleston's Management Committee will agree an annual budget to support our consultation and communication activities and deliver the Strategy described in this document. The Management Committee will receive quarterly reports on the implementation of the Strategy.

**15.2 (a) Resources for Registered Tenants' Groups** : the Association recognises the right of tenants to organise themselves and to speak to the Association with a collective voice. The creation of "Registered Tenant Organisations" (RTOs) is a central concept to the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 which aims to give tenants groups a recognised role in the tenant participation process.

The Association recognises that in order to achieve registration, a Tenant Organisation has to meet a range of criteria as set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (Registration of Tenant Organisations) Order 2002. The Association would therefore expect tenant groups to:

- Adopt a written constitution
- Be open to anyone within the constitution's definition of membership irrespective of gender, religion, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation
- Have elected as a minimum a Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary
- If seeking grant assistance, have established a bank account for the group
- Agree to hold an Annual General Meeting where office bearers are elected

Shettleston's Management Committee will agree to support registered groups of tenants where there is demand and interest. We will provide training for tenants who want to form a registered group and we will provide staff support for the administration of meetings and activities. We will enable tenants and residents to attend meetings by offering help with carer costs, in accordance with our policy. We will make staff available to attend meetings as required and we will provide meeting space at no cost to the groups.

Registered groups have a right to be consulted about any proposals relating to services that Shettleston provides – this is in addition to the formation of focus groups and more general consultation. Our support will enable registered groups to operate independently and be an effective voice for the tenants they represent. We will meet the costs of obtaining independent advice for tenants' groups where necessary. We will maintain a public register of Registered Tenants' Organisations.

**15.2 (b) Appeals** : A tenant organisation may appeal against the Association's decision to either:

- Not register the organisation
- Remove the organisation from the Register; or
- Not remove the organisation from the Register

The appeal will be dealt with in accordance with the Association's Complaints Policy. If the tenant organisation is not satisfied with the outcome of the internal appeal it may appeal formerly to the Regulation and Inspection Division of the Scottish Housing Regulator who will consider the matter on behalf of Scottish Ministers.

- 15.3 On-line and digital communication** : we will offer a variety of methods to respond to surveys and requests for information to maximise the potential for tenants and residents to have their say. During the term of this Strategy, we will continue to develop our use of texting to improve the service we offer to tenants and residents and to increase the range of options that they can use to give us their views.
- 15.4 Taking account of preferences** : When signing up new tenants and in each satisfaction survey, we will ask about their preferred means of communicating with us. We will use this information to communicate effectively with individual tenants and residents and to inform our general approach to information and consultation. Whenever we have contact with a current or potential tenant or resident, we will invite them to register for our e-bulletin, to 'like' Shettleston on Facebook or to follow us on Twitter. At sign-up visits and subsequent tenancy sustainment visits, we will provide information about the various ways in which tenants and residents can engage with us.

## **16. Monitoring and Review**

This Strategy will be subject to continual review and is intended to grow and evolve over time as circumstances change.

We will collect a range of information and feedback to enable staff, tenants and residents to assess the success of the Strategy in meeting its aims and objectives. We will consider and review:

- How participation took place ie. Methods used and number of people who participated?
- On what subjects and topics did consultation and participation take place?
- What arrangements were made to ensure there were equal opportunities to participate?
- What feedback was received from tenants and Registered Tenant Organisations?
- How were the results of participation reflected in the outcome?
- How much did the consultation and participation cost?
- What were the timescales for participation and consultation?

Feedback on the effectiveness of the Strategy will be sought from the RTOs, via the newsletter, web-site, Facebook and Twitter to inform the formal review.

Reports based on feedback from HOWDY responses, complaints and comments will be made on a quarterly basis to the Management Committee and to tenants and residents via the newsletter.

The Association will formerly review its Engagement Strategy, in consultation with registered groups and residents on a three yearly basis.

This Strategy was formerly agreed by the Management Committee on 7th November, 2017.

## Shettleston Housing Association Equality Impact Assessment



Name of the <b>policy / proposal</b> to be assessed	Engagement Strategy	Is this a <b>new policy / proposal or a revision?</b>	Revision
Person(s) responsible for the assessment	Policy & Performance Manager		
<b>1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose</b> of the policy / proposal	This Strategy has been developed to enable Shettleston Housing Association to engage effectively with people who use or want to use our services and who live or want to live in our community.		
<b>2. Who is intended to benefit</b> from the policy / proposal? ( <i>e.g. applicants, tenants, staff, contractors</i> )	The Strategy identifies the range of activities that Shettleston Housing Association will undertake to support tenants and residents – and people who want to use our services – to comment on the services they receive and to help us improve those services in ways that reflect their needs and aspirations.		
<b>3. What outcomes</b> are <b>wanted</b> from this policy / proposal? ( <i>e.g. the benefits to customers</i> )	As a community controlled landlord tenant/resident participation and majority community control are – and always have been – at the heart of what we do and how we carry out our activities. Our commitment to engaging effectively with service users means our services are informed by feedback and improvements are driven by tenant/resident expectations.		

4. Which **protected characteristics** could be **affected** by the proposal? (*tick all that apply*)

- ☐ Age
 ☐ Disability
 ☐ Marriage & Civil Partnership
 ☐ Pregnancy/Maternity
 ☒ Race  
☐ Religion or Belief
 ☐ Gender
 ☐ Gender Reassignment
 ☐ Sexual Orientation

5. If the policy / proposal is not relevant to any of the **protected characteristics** listed in part 4, state why and end the process here.

6. Describe the **likely positive or negative impact(s)** the policy / proposal could have on the groups identified in part 4

## Positive impact(s)

## Negative impact(s)

### Minority Ethnic

There may be negative impact on those for whom English is a second language who may find it more difficult to engage with the Association.

7. What **actions** are **required** to address the impacts arising from this assessment? (*This might include; collecting additional data, putting monitoring in place, specific actions to mitigate negative impacts*).

The Association is a member of the “Happy to Translate” which is a service that helps bridge the gap between people who want to access our services but may have difficulty in communicating in English. Our feedback surveys have and can be made available in other languages.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Job title): \_\_\_\_\_

Date the Equality Impact Assessment was completed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please attach the completed document as an appendix to your policy / proposal report**



